

A BRIEF STORY
OF THE
VINCHOORKAR FAMILY

BY
S. R. VINCHOORKAR.



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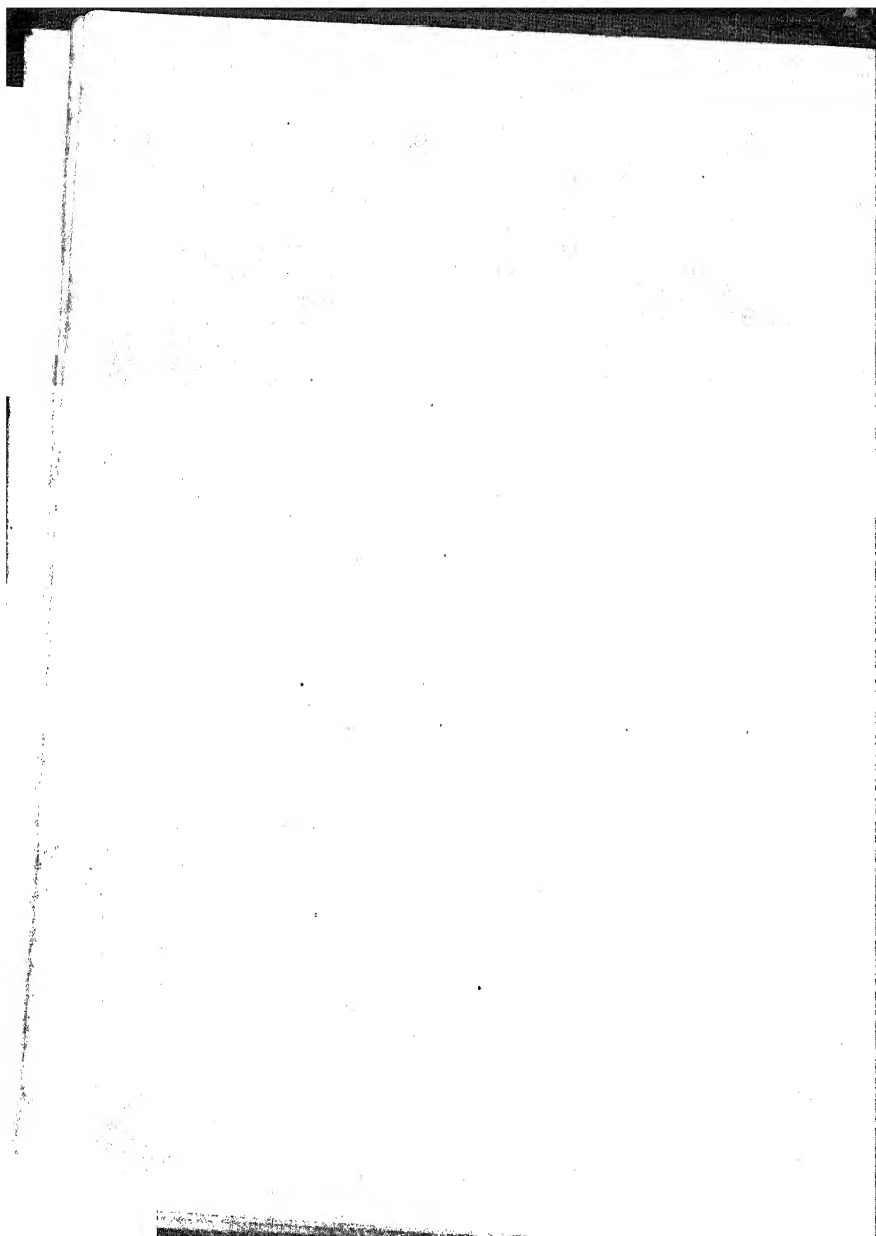
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PREFACE.

This humble attempt at a brief sketch of the history of the Vinchoorkar Family has been made in response to the wishes of a few friends to have a handy English volume giving the principal features of the story of this historic family. It has not, of course, been possible within the small compass of the book to bring out all the chief events in the history of the Vinchoorkars nor to do proper justice to them. The writer will, however, it is hoped, receive the indulgence that is due to a young man of moderate abilities and experience just on the point of completing his university course, if there are any shortcomings in the book. He owes it to himself also to express his sense of appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered to him in various ways in the preparation of the volume by his kind friends, Mr. R. K. Lagu, M. A. and Prof. V. G. Kale, M. A., whose advice has been invaluable to him.

S. R. Vinchoorkar.



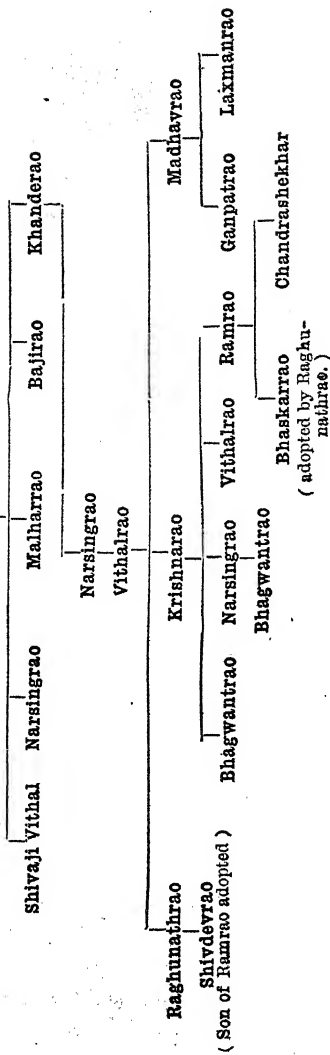


Shrimant Raghoonathrao Vithalrao
Vinchookar. C.S.I. The late chief of Vinchoor.

Genealogical table of the Vinchurkar Family.

VITHAL SHIVDEV.

(THE FOUNDER.)



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The Vinchurkar Family.

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VI

ITS RISE AND PROGRESS.

CHAPTER I.

So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes,
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

—Shakespeare.

HE Vinchoorkars have taken their name after the city of their residence. They were originally Danis of Saswada doing duty as recorders of grain and accepting a portion of the same as their Vatan. Added to this Vatan, they had extensive lands and rich garden-plots yielding fruit of all possible variety. In course of time the ancestral estates came to be

divided and the family branched off into two households. The elder household claims the distinction of producing the man who founded the well-known Raje-Bahaddar family of Nasik and Malegaon. But the sturdy personality, who made the Vinchoorkar name famous in the annals of the Deccan, was born in the younger household.

Shiwajee pant of the younger household, had three sons : Aburao, Trimbakrao, and Vithal Shivdev, born in 1695—the youngest of the lot. Speaking in a worldly sense the household was not very well off; but the elder two, Aburao and Trimbakrao, did what lay in them to bear the burden of family maintenance. As regards Vithal Shivdev, he was sowing his wild oats. Of medium height, he was of a strong build and had long arms reaching down to his knees. He had a passion for riding and outdoor sports, was hard of muscle and bone and as good an athlete

as could be summoned all the country round. But he did nothing to bear the family-burden and came in for harsh words and harsh treatment at the hands of his two elder brothers. This was galling in itself, but the climax was reached when his father one day rebuked the youngster for his wild tendencies. He would prefer, he remarked, to see his son dead ; the idle do-nothing was only a burdensome addition to the family. He finished by asking Vithal Shivdev to clear out, who thereupon fixed his residence at Madhe, situate three miles from Satara. There he devoted himself to a saint by name Amritswami and upon the retirement of Amritswami he offered his single-minded devotion to his successor, Pawanbawa. This latter recommended Vithal Shivdev to one Bakshi, a respectable servant of Shahu, the king of Satara. And Bakshi employed him in his household to superintend the management of his horse.

King Shahu had a passion for hunting. Vithal Shivdev managed on one occasion to join the hunting-party of the King. The party roused a boar and hemmed the animal in. The boar made desperate efforts to rush through the encircling huntsmen and it seemed as if it would succeed in its last efforts, when Vithal Shivdev pouncing upon the animal closed his thighs round its body and held on to it, clutching its ears. Anon came the King who spiked the animal through as it lay in Vithal's grip. Being pleased with the exploit, Shahu took him over into his service, where he continued to show himself deserving of the favour and rose to be the commandant of ten horsemen. And then at the age of 21 he was married to the daughter of the Kulkarni of KENJALGAON.

In 1720 Chimnaji Appa was despatched to put down the rebellious Nabob Siddi-Sada of Janjira—an island on the Konkan coast.

Vithal Shivdev accompanied Chimnaji Appa in this expedition. Greatly he distinguished himself in the fight and cut down the Nabab in person. As a result he was raised to the command of the horse he brought over from the enemy. On personally hearing the tale of the exploit from Chimnaji Appa, Shahu had his services transferred for the Peshwa's benefit.

Balaji Vishwanath died in 1720 and in 1722 Bajirao was elected to succeed him in his office as the Second Peshwa. Next year Bajirao had to meet Daudkhan—the Mahomedan General sent against him by the Subhedar of Malwa. At Burhanpur the fight came on and Daudkhan was utterly routed. Vithal Shivdev accompanied Bajirao in this expedition and as was to be expected, acquitted himself well in the fight. In 1724 Bajirao turned his arms towards Dehli and Vithal Shivdev was found in the forefront of every encounter with the Ma-

homedan enemy of the Peshwa. As a consequence he was asked to enlist a great number of recruits under his command. Then came the request of his Guru Amritswami to build afresh the decaying temple of Narshinha, standing in the encircling confluence of Bheema and Neera.

In 1730 Vithal Shivdev assisted Chimnaji Appa to punish Dayabahaddar, the new Subhedar of Malwa, who objected to the Mahratta claim for Chauth and Surdeshmukhi. In 1731 Sayaji Gujjar commanded the expedition against Gadhemandala. Vithal Shivdev was ordered to go out in his aid. Faithfully he performed the task and captured the fort. As a reward he was raised to the command of an independent battalion. Also it was ordered henceforward that the expenses of Vithal Shivdev, private and those incurred for the maintenance of the force under him, should be met from the Peshwa treasury.

Vithal Shivdev accompanied Bajirao in (2) 1733 when the latter surprised Futtekhan Bangash, the Subhedar of Malwa, and forced him to fly from Bundelkhand. The Subhedar had been pouring his army into Bundelkhand; as a result Raja Chhatrasala found himself pressed hard and sent for aid to Bajirao. Vithal Shivdev was the righthand man of the Peshwa in that surprise-expedition and as usual it gave him one more occasion to add to the lustre of his arms.

The year 1739 is remarkable in the Peshwa annals as witnessing the great fight between the Mahrattas and the Portuguese for the fort of Bassein. Vithal Shivdev formed one of the band of valourous Lieutenants, who helped the plucky Chimnaji Appa to capture (2) the fort. Vithal Shivdev was asked next to fight the Portuguese, independently on the sea-coast and he captured the seaward places of the Portuguese, Salsette and others.

(4) In 1740 Bajirao engaged himself in forming a coalition of Rajputs against the Moghuls and he did not fail to take Vithal Shivdev with him. At this time Bajirao intended swooping down upon Nasirjang, Nizam-ulmulk's son, who had established his camp in the vicinity of Aurangabad. But reinforcements reached the prince opportunely and what was intended as a surprise-attack developed into a great fight. In this battle Vithal Shivdev is said to have surpassed even his usual valiant self. Ultimately in the treaty concluded at Mungipaithana, the Nizam agreed to cede two districts on the Narbuda coast and gave the Peshwa as Jahagir a few villages in the Chandwad province. The Jahagir was, however, made over to Vithal Shivdev for the maintenance of the horse under him. Soon after Bajirao died and the office passed on to his son Balaji Bajirao.

Thus the naughty do-nothing boy whose death was devoutly wished by his parents had made a name for himself. The obscure huntsman of Shahu had been gradually forging ahead. He had illumined his obscurity with the glory of his arm. The sturdiness of bone and muscle that weighed hard on his brothers' mind was destined to be the precious instrument of a remarkable career. Towards the close of Balaji Vishwanath's tenure of office, the glimmer of greatness was faintly visible : it was the presage of the oncoming shining deeds, which run like a thread of gold throughout the momentous career of Bajirao the First.

In 1753 Raghunathrao was appointed to command the Gujrath expedition. He began with Surat and extended his sway onwards. Vithal Shivdev was asked to manage the affairs of Urapad Mahal, as he had captured that province without any one's aid. The slow progress made, however, delayed the capture of the city of Ahmedabad and its fort. The Peshwa sent reinforcements under Dattaji Shinde to hurry on the capture of Ahmedabad. This put Raghunathrao on his mettle. He thought it a disgrace to avail himself of the reinforcing army and informed his Sardars accordingly. Sardars Naro Bahaddar and Vithal Shivdev agreed to do their best to capture the city before Shinde's arrival. They had to oppose the brave Jawamardhkhan. But they proved themselves irresistible. Dattaji Shinde arrived late to see the fort and the city captured by Raghunathrao.

Damaji Gaikwad was left in charge of the captured provinces and Raghunathrao penetrated further into Upper India in obedience to the orders of the Peshwa. Marching upward they reached Ajmere, exacting Chauth and Surdeshmukhi all round. And now they reached Kumbheri—the strong fort of the Jat King—which offered resistance, but succumbed soon enough under the roaring cannon-fire which Raghunathrao ordered to be poured on to it.

After this Raghunathrao went off on a visit to Dehli, invited thereto by the Vazeer of the Moghul Emperor. In the meanwhile Vithal Shivdev had to marry a second time, owing to the death of his first wife. The marriage came off at Kalpi. On his way back he encamped at Gwalior. The casual halt gave the occasion for a great fight. Some of Vithal Shivdev's horsemen had been scoring the country in quest of fodder. They chanced

to meet a detachment belonging to the forces of the Jat-King. The latter objected to the activities of the horsemen of Vithal Shivdev and in the skirmish that followed, some of them were captured and led off as captives. Vithal Shivdev politely sent a messenger requesting the Jat-Raja to send back his horsemen. The minister of the Raja returned an insulting message, saying that the Peshwa had unwarrantably entered the territory of the Jats, that valour was never a strong point of the Brahmins and finally if Vithal Shivdev wanted to recover his men, he should go down on his knees before the Jat Sovereign, who would then graciously hand over the prisoners to their old master. Vithal Shivdev was incensed by the message. Immediately he sent for his forces at Dehli, gathered fresh detachments round him so far as he could and commenced hostilities with the Jat-King. It was tedious work, capturing the strongly

built fortress of Gwalior. Three months passed, yet Vithal Shivdev did not find himself nearer his end. And in the interim, Raghunathrao wrote to him condemning his action and threatening displeasure in the event of his failure to capture the fort. Finally he was informed that no pecuniary help would be given to discharge the debt incurred during the continuance of the war with the Jats. But Vithal Shivdev was not a man to be daunted by difficulties. His courage rose with his difficulties. In the last desperate attack on the fort, when the forces of the contending armies met in a close tussle, victory found him wounded in the company of his gallant associates, Mahadji Shitole and Yamaji Ravalekar, not to forget the obscure yet faithful Moteeram. The Sovereign of the Jats was cut to pieces and in the treaty which followed Vithal Shivdev reserved for his master Gwalior and the district lying to the south

of the city. But the war cost, all told, twelve lacs. And Sadashivrao talked much of discipline and refused to liquidate the debt. However Nanasaheb promised secretly to pay off the debt from the Peshwa Treasury.

The expedition against the Nabob of Savanur undertaken by the Peshwa soon after had a very slight originating cause. Muzfurkhan, a commandant in the Army of M. Bussey, had gone over to the Peshwa side. Under his training a good many new battalions were formed. But when he was sent out in aid of Mahadaji Purandare, commanding an expedition into Karnatic, differences arose and he left the Peshwa Camp. After some fruitless wanderings, he settled down at the Court of the Nabob of Savanur. The Peshwa ordered the Nabob to make over Muzfurkhan. He refused and hostilities were immediately commenced. At one time, when the Peshwa was putting his forces into mo-

tion, aid was sought of the Sovereign of Hyderabad. But on second thought it was settled to capture the fort of Savanur before the reinforcements sent by the Nizam could reach the place of strife. Holkar and Vithal Shivdev took upon themselves the execution of the arduous task. It was a tough fight with the disciplined soldiers of the Nabob, who were a muscular lot, courageous and cunning wielders of the weapons of war. In the struggle Vithal Shivdev was wounded in the shoulder ; but he received complete compensation in the satisfaction of his master. The Peshwa not only promised to liquidate the debt incurred during the siege of Gwalior, but honoured his noble servant by bestowing upon him the embroidered flag (Jari-Patka) and drum and all such ensigns as are the peculiar possession of royalty.

Delhi had become a house of intrigue about this time. Ahmadshaha of Afganistan had

a clever agent at the Moghul Court in the person of Najibuddavalla, a Rohila chief who was appointed Vazeer by Ahmadshaha himself. Najibuddavalla was looked upon with disfavour both by the Emperor and his real Vazeer. To oust him from his place they called in Raghunathrao's aid. And so it fell to Vithal Shivdev's share to punish the upstart Rohila Sardar. He captured Delhi and attacked the forces of Najibuddavalla, who ran off to Rohilkhand. The exploit secured for him the high favour of the Moghul Emperor, who showered on him pearl and silk, presented him a sword, added nearly 14 villages to his estate and bestowed on him the rank of a Sardar of his Court with the distinguishing title of 'Raje Umdar Tulmuluk Bahaddar.'

Now follows the grim tale of Panipat. On his way to the great battlefield Bhausahab captured Khetwada and Ahirwada. He in-

tended annexing the state *in extenso* because of the insolent behaviour of the King Nara-warwalla. But Vithal Shivdev interceded on his behalf and as a reward the King made over to him the city of Sahasrava and the village of Badhe. On one more occasion Vithal Shivdev interceded on behalf of the Raja of Soperwalla, who made over to him the possession of one of the taluks under his sway.

Soon after came about the great fight of Panipat. In the holocaust of Panipat all things precious in the Mahratta army were swept to destruction. The magic of the Mahratta sword lost its charm and the Mahratta Empire received a cruel shock even when its splendour was finding a shape for itself. Vithal Shivdev fought to the best of his ability and ultimately fell wounded on the battlefield. All the force under him was gone to 'the bourne from which no

traveller returns.' He himself was hit hard on the forehead and had two wounds to show on his two legs. Thus lying disabled on the battlefield, he was found out on the second day of the battle by his faithful attendants, Wakikar and Moteeram. Luckily one of them had fried grain with him. He offered his master a handful of the grain and dressed his wounds roughly with bands of cloth torn out of his turban. At night they bore him away from the battle-field to a village, half a mile off. For some time they kept to obscure lanes and by-roads, but subsequently when they came on to the high roads they mingled with the scattered remnants of the Mahratta army, wending their sorry way homeward. At Gwalior Vithal Shivdev made a prolonged halt. All his wounds were cured at the place and he utilized his great influence there for the benefit of the followers that had clung to him on the way. Then he proceeded to the

banks of the Narbudda and traced the Peshwa's route back to Poona.


On his arrival at Poona he begged permission of the Peshwa to pass the remainder of his life in retirement and contemplation. The Peshwa appealed to his common sense, saying that a brave man is defeated only to rise with greater glory from his defeat, and concluded by asking Vithal Shivdev to be in constant attendance upon himself. Constant association with the Peshwa revived the memory of Panipat and Vithal Shivdev had to recite the varying aspects of that woeful tale for the benefit of his master. On one occasion the Peshwa sought to know the truth about the many reports that had reached his ears concerning the behaviour of Malharrao Holkar. Vithal Shivdev stoutly defended Holkar against all aspersions cast on the integrity of his purposes. "No one was to be accused of turpitude or treachery,"

he said "every Mahratta Sardar put forth the utmost that was in him on the occasion of the battle. But the head of the army was impatient of all sound advice. Malhar-rao was unfortunate in that he had the temerity to counsel prudence. That was the sum of his guilt. And he was ready to share the same with his honest comrade."

CHAPTER III.

Foremost Captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.

Tennyson.

oon after Nanasahib died and Madhav-
rao succeeded him in his office as
Peshwa. At the beginning of Madhavrao's ad-
ministration Vithal Shivdev was asked to
move to the North. Mahadji Scindia owned
extensive dominions in Upper India and the
Peshwa too had recently captured Gwalior and
Ahirwada. Owing to the disastrous defeat of
Panipat however, the Mahratta claim to
sovereignty came to be scorned by their
newly-made subjects. This rebellious spirit
had to be subdued ; but Scindia was not
bold enough to undertake the task. As a
consequence Vithal Shivdev was ordered out
on the undertaking. He was successful in

his mission. He made the defiant subjects obey the rule of the Peshwa and the revenue dues began to be regularly collected.

Meanwhile intrigue was rife in the Peshwa household. Raghunathrao asserted his elderly authority, seeing that the Peshwa was young. But Madhavrao's mother resented the interference and Madhavrao himself was disposed to be guided by his mother. Finally matters came to a head on one occasion and an open quarrel broke out between Raghunathrao and his nephew, the young Peshwa. This was followed by intrigue on the part of Madhavrao's mother. She hated Raghunathrao and his partisan Sardars and would fain drive them all beyond the limits of the Peshwa rule. Failing this, she thought of imprisoning the whole lot of them. As a preliminary towards the execution of her plans, she tried to organize her party, which included Trimbak Pethe, Bapu

Fadnis, Bapu Naik, Piraji Nimbalkar and a good many military commanders. As the first step towards the accomplishment of her desire, Madhavrao's mother got Raghunathrao removed from Karbhari's place and appointed Trimbakrao instead. Eventually the plot leaked out and Raghunathrao wrote to Vithal Shivdev to hasten his departure from Gwalior. On his arrival at Poona, the Peshwa's mother wanted to arrest him as a partisan of Raghunathrao. But his friend Holkar gave him timely notice of the danger in which he stood and packed him off to a village-Vaf in his Jahagir. Vithalrao asked Raje Bahadur to fly to Malegaon and Raghunathrao himself took shelter at Vinchoor.

Sakharam Bapu, Nilkanth Mahadeo and Jivanrao Keshav hastened to join Raghunathrao at Vinchoor. On their arrival at Vinchoor they wrote to Vithal Shivdev to

come down to Vinchoor. Orders went out now for the enlistment of fresh recruits and the Sardars took oaths to be true to each other and to Raghunathrao. Different districts were allotted to different Sardars for the maintenance of the forces under them and for their private expenses. This was a new departure; for so long it was the practice to have everything paid in cash. Vithal Shivdev got a Sanad for districts yielding 16,85,000 Rupees as their yearly income. Again aid was sought of the Nizam. He was promised the forts of Daulatabad, Shivneri, Ahmednagar and Asheri, provided the authority of Raghunathrao as Peshwa was firmly established in the Mahratta dominions. The Nizam eagerly accepted the terms and ordered Muradkhan to proceed to Vinchoor with 20,000 men and he himself, proceeded to Aurangabad with an army mustering

50,000 strong. Immediately after Raghunathrao moved his forces towards Poona. He was met on the way at Higni by the Peshwa's forces commanded by Madhavrao, who was accompanied by Trimbak Pethe and Patwardhan. The issue of the battle was not uncertain, for Raghunathrao's army greatly outnumbered that of the Peshwa. Madhavrao tried to put the best face on the matter, deprecated family dissensions and offered willing submission to the restraint of Raghunathrao. But his adherents Patwardhans and others had to fly to the Court of Nizam to save their lives. The Nizam welcomed them heartily and expressed himself glad to perceive the nephew reconciled to his uncle.

Raghunathrao now introduced new arrangements. Nilkanth Purandare was appointed Diwan and Sakharampant Bokil was made Nayab Diwan. Vithal Shivdev

was given the dignity of the Amatya Office. Bhaskarrao, his son, became Pratinidhi.

It was not long before Raghunathrao tried to blow up the fortress of Miraj. The hostile act had its origin in the action of Gopalrao Patwardhan when he went over to the Court of Nizam. Raghunathrao would not listen to anything Patwardhan's father said. Ultimately Vithal Shivdev interceded to say that Govindrao and his friends should be conveyed to Mangalwedha and that the fortress should not suffer demolition. But this wanton act of Raghunathrao was of a piece with others, which were in like manner strongly disapproved by his adherents. Many a Sardar went over to the Nizam and was welcomed by him. At this time the Nizam had a clever diplomatist as his Diwan. Vithal Sunder had far-reaching ideas of entirely pulling to pieces the Mahratta Sovereignty. It was

not difficult to pick a quarrel with Raghunathrao. For he had not been able to keep his compact with the Nizam. Daulatabad alone was ceded to the Nizam. The commandants of other forts did not care to carry out the orders of Raghunathrao.

So the Nizam turned his arms against Poona. Raghunathrao pretended to meet him in open battle, but he did not seriously intend anything of the kind. His army was altogether inadequate to face the Nizam's forces. So he followed the guerilla tactics. The fortifications of Aurangabad repulsed his overtures, but he levied Rs. 60,000 as tribute from Malkapur. He penetrated further into the dominions of the Nizam. In the meanwhile, the capital of the Empire was sacked by the Nizam. This last circumstance opened Raghunathrao's eyes to the fatal consequences of the family-breach. He recognised truth in his

nephew's words, when he said that the real objective before them was the annihilation of the Moghuls and they ought not to allow it to be obscured by domestic dissensions. So they set about gathering together their scattered forces. Madhavrao wrote to his adherents at the Nizam's Court, who hastened over to join him at his bidding and Janoji Bhonsala was also won over. At Rakshasbhuwan part of the Nizam's army under the command of Vithal Sunder suffered a heavy defeat, while the Nizam had to look on helplessly from the other side of the river Godawari. It was mainly through the energy of Madhavrao that this battle was won. At a moment when it seemed that all was lost and Raghoba was carried off in triumph, the spirited nephew rushed into the strife commanding the very Sardars appointed as his restraining guard and wrested victory from the triumphant Moghuls.

And now the Peshwa Sardars would not let alone the Nizam, who had crossed the Godawari. They pursued him to Aurangabad, Vithal Shivdev being ahead of the rest. In a fierce attempt to carry off the chief elephant of the Nizam, 2000 of Vithal Shivdev's followers were cut to pieces; but the losses on the Nizam's side amounted to 5,000. A skilful flight into the well-fortified city of Aurangabad saved the Nizam the ignominy of being captured. According to the treaty which was not long in coming, the Nizam got districts yielding a yearly revenue of ten lacs, whereas he was promised districts worth annually 51 lacs. "Vithal Sunder was alone responsible for the stirring of this strife," remarked the Nizam; "personally he was disinclined to take part in it."

When Madhavrao was reinstated in his authority, he handed back the fort of Miraj

to Gopalrao Patwardhan. Sakharam Bapu was confirmed in his office as Nayab Diwan. But difficulties arose with regard to the allotment of districts to the several Sardars for the maintenance of their forces. The new arrangement left the Peshwa the lord of a pitiful expanse of dominions. So it was settled to reduce by one-fourth the previous allotments. Vithal Shivdev agreed to the plan when induced to do so by Raghoba Dada in person. The Rastes and Patwardhans were now included in the arrangement. Vithal Shivdev got as his share Dhulia, Songari in Khandesh, Patoda in Gangathadi, Urpada Mahal in Gujrath, Sihur Ashte, Duraya, Dewipura and Ichhawar in Malwa and Bhitrawar near Gwalior.

In 1764 the Peshwa army was preparing itself for an expedition into the Karnatic against the adventurous Hyderalli. And

Malharrao Holkar had come over to Poona with 15,000 horsemen. About this time happened an incident illustrative of the Peshwa's refusal to ignore party motives. Vithal Shivdev was the acknowledged right-hand man of Raghoba. He had been aiding him to such good purpose in his hour of trial. But his faithfulness to Raghoba's cause made him an eyesore to the Peshwa and for long the spite rankled without vent. About this time an opportunity for its assertion arose and it burst out with vehemence. It so happened one day, that a few of the officers of Vithal Shivdev were amusing themselves with equestrian feats, when they were joined by a company of the Peshwa's officers. Quarrel came into being ere long and the two parties busied themselves in a skirmish. News reached the Peshwa about this skirmish. He lashed himself into a fury

and issued orders for the imprisonment of Vithal Shivdev and the wholesale dispersion of his camp. Vithal Shivdev wrote to Raghoba, who promised to bring his nephew round. But Vithal Shivdev was well aware that the uncle had no influence with the nephew. So early next morning, he prepared himself and his 5,000 followers for the last grim purpose of his life. They were not afraid of being cut down; but they would die sword in hand, even while making short work of the lives of others. At this juncture Malharrao interfered. He opened Madhavrao's eyes to the reality of the situation, saying that the 5,000 followers of Vithal Shivdev would sweep to death 15,000 on the other side, before they met their death. Besides this, the loss of a Sardar of Vithal Shivdev's calibre was sure to be keenly felt. In conclusion, the Holkar suggested Madhavrao to send

Vithal Shivdev on a distant expedition. Madhavrao recognized the sense of the speech and asked Holkar to bring about the reconciliation. When he was brought into the presence of the Peshwa, Vithal Shivdev spoke of his unchanging loyalty to the Peshwa family and asked leave to pass the rest of his life in retirement, as he could not live under the disfavour of his master.

The Karnatic expedition, which followed, did not open out well. On learning the news of the approach of the Peshwa, Hyderalli marched to Anawati and established his camp amidst impenetrable forests. Moreover, he was not meanly equipped. He had with him 20,000 horsemen and 40,000 infantry, of which half the number was a well-disciplined force. Madhavrao sought counsel of Sakharam Bapu. He advised temporary retreat to Poona, till better equipment

should enable them to meet successfully Hyder's disciplined army. But Madhavrao was not a soldier of the recessional mould and he found an adviser in Vithal Shivdev, who was made of the same stern stuff. "Push on" said he, "it is not meet for a soldier to go back upon his march." And so they pushed on. The wily Hyderalli met a subtler foe in the Peshwa and he was forced out of his comfortable position. In the battle which came on, the well-worked artillery of Hyder made havoc in the Peshwa's ranks. But Vithal Shivdev girded up his loins with the intent of capturing that artillery. He made a brave rush at its roaring mouth and captured it. This facilitated the way to victory and soon after the Peshwa army was crowned with success. Madhavrao was a personal witness to Vithal Shivdev's desperate deeds under the fiery mouth of the cannon. And

whatever lingering prejudice lurked in his mind, now melted away in the hour of triumph. He gave expression to his gratitude frankly, spoke of the victory as being solely due to Vithal Shivdev's valour and presented the Sardar with two pieces of cannon out of the captured lot. In course of time, a treaty was concluded with Hyderalli, who was compelled to pay 32 lacs as expense of the war.

After the Karnatic expedition, work had to be found for the forces lying idle at Poona. Madhavrao suggested Upper India as opening out a sphere for their activity. The Peshwa rule was not firmly established in Upper India ; and though a few years back Vithal Shivdev was despatched to put matters straight in that province, he had to hurry away owing to the untoward trend of events at home. So Raghoba Dada was fixed upon as the pre-

son fit to accomplish the task of introducing order into those confused up-country provinces and he was to take Malharrao and Vithal Shivdev with him as being conversant with local details and difficulties.

In the meanwhile, Janoji Bhonsala gave cause for quarrel and it became necessary to turn their attention to Nagpore. For long the Bhonsala succeeded in evading a face-to-face encounter with the Peshwa army and ultimately recognizing his weakness offered terms which were accepted. Raghunathrao now proceeded to Malwa, where he was soon joined by Holkar and Vithal Shivdev. He then marched on to Gwalior. On their way thither Scindia and Raghunathrao fell out and the Scindia, it seemed likely, would fare ill at the hands of Raghunathrao. When Madhavrao was informed of the matter, he requested Vithal Shivdev to intercede strongly to save

Scindia the disgrace of punishment. The Scindia family was loyal to the core and Madhavrao did not show himself forgetful of what was due to it.

At Gwalior Raghoba Dada found the Rana of Gohad engaged in undermining the Peshwa authority. Moreover it appeared that the Rana had absorbed a goodly portion of the Mahratta conquests in Upper India. Raghoba Dada set to work immediately and laid seige to the fortress of Gohad. The fortress was strongly built and resisted the might of the Mahratta arm. Much loss of life was incurred, but it did not prove of any avail. In the meanwhile Madhavrao kept on corresponding with Vithal Shivdev, exhorting him to write in detail as regards the progress of matters in Upper India. About this time Malharrao died and grief seized the heart of Vithal Shivdev and Raghoba Dada. As a result they had no

energy left to prosecute the seige with vigour and eagerly accepted the Rana's proposals for peace. He agreed to pay a tribute of 3 lacs.

Vithal Shivdev had left his garrison at Gwalior and the dues had remained long unpaid. The people there began to clamour for money. To relieve Vithal Shivdev from the pressing demand for the discharge of dues, Raghoba Dada made over to him the district of Uchade Bharoli. Subsequently Raghoba Dada returned to the Deccan, leaving Vithal Shivdev to finish his work behind him. In 1767 Vithalrao returned home. *En route*, his health had given way. So on his arrival at Vinchoor, he called his son and followers to his side and made his final arrangement. Soon after he breathed his last.

Vithal Shivdev loved most his eldest son and appointed him as his successor. While on his death-bed, he talked to his son about

the unswerving loyalty they owed to the Peshwa family. "Even at the cost of our lives, we have to serve the master," spoke he and concluded by delivering over the charge of the whole estate to his beloved son. He asked all the assembled Sardars and Man-karies to respect the word of Shivaji Vithal, as they would have respected his own word.

As the head of a large family, Vithal Shivdev loved all and was honoured by all. Fiery by temperament, the fire in his nature was subdued by a long-headed thoughtfulness. He was a man of simple habits and disliked show in all its aspects. Ordinarily he would walk out, attended by a score of horsemen and he never mounted an elephant or never allowed himself to be carried in a Palanquin. A favourite disciple of Amritswami, the simple soldier died in his simple faith. Early in the morning he used to take a cold bath and would not touch food on fasting days.

Of the diplomatists of the time, Vithal Shivdev was in close association with Sakharam Bapu and Chinto Vithal. Of all his comrades in arms, he loved Malharrao Holkar best. Sometimes the brave associates carried on war against the enemy in association, on other occasions they had to separate, Malharrao Holkar subduing the foe in the Deccan, while Vithal Shivdev was engaged in up-country warfare. When he had occasion to stay in the Deccan, Holkar fixed his residence at Chandwad; for before he was Holkar, he had been the Deshmukh of Chandwad. As Vinchoor formed a part of Chandwad, the honour of being a Patil thereof was claimed by Vithal Shivdev. So as a subordinate to a superior observing the old relation, Vithal Shivdev would go out to welcome Holkar, the Deshmukh of Chandwad and offer to make presents. Holkar, in his turn, recognizing the Deshmukh of Chandwad as an humble

servant of the Jahgirdar of Vinchoor, would go out to welcome. Vithal Shivdev in that capacity entertained him as a royal guest. There was romance in the companionship of these two veteran fighters under the Mahratta flag and the romance survived all the shocks of chance and change. The world had no charm for Vithal Shivdev, when Malharrao passed out of it and he hastened to follow his friend in death.

Finally, I have to record the simple-hearted charity of my great ancestor. He has himself recorded it in brick and stone-monuments, which seem to mock this frail pen-and-ink attempt of mine. The Vinchoorkar estate is dotted with the many temples he raised to his God Narsinha and many a deserving Brahmin even now offers his prayers for the peace of his master's magnanimous soul.

CHAPTER IV.

VITHAL Shivdev had five sons, 4 from his first wife Rakhamabai, daughter of the Kulkarni of Kenjal and the 5th from his second wife, Yamanabai of Kalpi. The names of the five respectively were Shivaji Vithal, Narsingrao Vithal, Malharrao Vithal, Bajirao Vithal and Khanderao Vithal.

Shivaji Vithal was the best beloved son of his father. According to the father's fond belief, Shivaji had brought good luck to him ever since his birth. He was short in stature and dark in complexion; but he had a generous, forgiving, and kindly nature. He was self-possessed and unexcitable in character, but he did not lack bravery when occasion demanded its exercise from him. Even during his father's lifetime, he had wrested from the Nizam's possession Ankai, Rajdar and other forts. He was a familiar figure at the

Peshwa Court and had secured the honour of Palkhi and a separate allowance for himself, as the reward of valour manifested in the capture of the Nizam's fortresses. Finally he had shown himself competent to supervise all the details of the estate, when his father was away fighting for his master in distant lands.

Narsingrao, the second son, did not lack valour, but he was cruel of temperament and impulsive in action. All the five brothers came to logger-heads with each other, a few days after the death of Vithal Shivdev. So Sakharam Bapu, in obedience to the command of the Peshwa, recognised the claim of the eldest to the title of the house and the four were assigned yearly allowances. Narsingrao, however, refused to accept the arrangement and seized every opportunity for strife. So with the consent of the Peshwa, Shivajipant had him confined with his wife at Asta

in the Malwa district. He did not live long in confinement and after his death his wife followed him on to the pyre.

Malharrao, the third son, was the handsomest of all five. He was far-sighted and clever in the management of all Durbar affairs. He had received most honorably Raghoba Dada and his Sardars, when they had come over to Vinchoor on the occasion of their temporary exile from Poona. Naro Shankar Raje-Bahadar had an idea of adopting Malharrao, but Vithal Shivdev refused to give away his son in adoption. He followed his father in death, but his wife lived on till 1837.

Bajirao Vithal, the fourth son, took to bad ways early in life. Pleasure was the one precious ideal of his life, and the pursuit of pleasure ruined the balance of his mind. In the midst of it all, he lost his wife and the loss of his wife hastened his own end.

Khanderao Vithal, the fifth in order, was feeble of frame, but he was a man of parts. His abilities in financial matters were of a high order and he was a man of learning and taste. His weakness lay in the fact that he was no soldier, but he cleverly clung to his eldest brother and obeyed him in all matters. Thus earning his favour, he subsequently earned his title too.

Chimnaji Khanderao, the Vinchoorkar Ambassador at the Peshwa Court, was working originally as Kulkarni at Pimplegaon in Khed. He was a brave man, eminent in all practical things and supervised the management of the Vinchoorkar forces when abroad. He accompanied Vithal Shivdev in all battles he fought and each successive battle-field gave him an occasion to add to his warlike repute. At the request of Vithal Shivdev, the Peshwa made over to him as Inam Nandesar in Patoda district, yielding a yearly

revenue of Rs. 800. Besides this, Vithal Shivdev himself gave him Inam lands at Vinchoor and Saykheda, yielding an income of Rs. 200 annually. To add to this, he was given Sanad for many other plots under cultivation. At Pimplegaon, Chimnaji built a magnificent residence for himself and a temple to Shiva; and at Palkhed he bought the office of Kulkarni for his family.

Vithal Trimbak and Naro Trimbak were the chief Karbharies of the Vinchoorkar estate. The family produced a great many eminent men and the office of the Karbhari became hereditary in it.

Aburao Vithal and Baburao Vithal were the commanding Officers of the Vinchoorkar forces. Originally they did duty as Kulkarnis respectively of Takli and Kotam. But the soldier in them rose superior to the penman and got his worth recognized. From Vithal Shivdev onwards to the downfall of

the Peshwa, the family supplied the Vinchoorkar estate with commanding officers. In fact the office had become hereditary in the family. The survivors have been granted as pension lands worth Rs. 1,000 a year.

Khandooji Kenjale was the Chief Officer of the household. He was a Mahratta by caste and the Patil of Kenjale in Wai. His sterling integrity won for him the favour of Vithal Shivdev and he was assigned the duty of looking after the details of domestic business. Besides this, he had to supervise the Vatans of the family.

There were 700 Mankaris under Vithal Shivdev. These Mankaris were big-salaried Officers, who had the honours of Chauri, Abdagiri and Torch given to them. They were descendants of noble Mahratta families and the sword and the lance were the weapons with which they dealt destruction. The horsemen in the cavalry were equipped with

the aforesaid weapons. For every horse bought for mount, the price fixed was not to be less than 500 Rupees. There were separate divisions of cavalry. Each division had a commanding Officer of its own, a flag and a drum.

The infantry consisted mostly of Mussalmans. They had the dagger and the sword for their weapons. But there was a separate division of Rajput Soldiers.


Vithal Shivdev supervised in person the training and discipline of his force. He held mock-fights and taught his soldiers all the intricacies of defensive as well as offensive warfare.

The number of the force all told amounted to 5,000 : but occasionally it rose to 25,000. The officering of the various departments of the State was mostly entrusted to Brahmins. The revenue of the State amounted to 50 lacs.

CHAPTER V.

The Prince in no wise differed from his sire,
As light born of light.....

Kalidasa.

 HE news of Vithal Shivdev's death was conveyed to the Peshwa through a Vakeel, Govind Laxuman, who was asked to speed thither, accompanied by 25 horsemen, He was entrusted with two communications, one for the Peshwa, Madhavarao the First and one for his minister, Sakharam Bapu. The Peshwa received the news with great concern and his minister gave expression to the loss they sustained in a beautiful image of those old-world days. 'The structure of the Peshwa's glory' he said, 'reposed on a four-fold basis of pillars. Out of these four, the Scindia, the Holkar, the Vinchoorkar and the Mirajkar, it was somewhat severe to have two pulled down—Vithal Shivdev Vinchoorkar

and Malharrao Holkar.' 'Vithal Shivdev has five sons,' remarked the Peshwa 'and the eldest has already proved his capacity to succeed his father; so the title-deeds of the estate and the dignity of his father' concluded he 'should pass to him.' He finished by asking Sakharam Bapu to send some one with the Vakeel to console Shivaji Vithal in his sad bereavement. Separately the Minister and Master wrote to Shivaji Vithal, the latter inviting Shivaji Vithal to see the Peshwa personally at the earliest opportunity.

Soon after when the Peshwa was out visiting the districts on the banks of the Godavari, Shivaji Vithal saw him at Anandwalli near Nasik. There the Peshwa invested him with the dignity of a Sardar and gave him permission to return to Vinchoor for a while to put matters straight, after which he was asked to come to the Peshwa Court at Poona.

In 1769 Madhavarao, who was smarting under the disgraceful defeat at Panipat, despatched Biniwale, Shivaji Vithal, Scindia and Tukoji Holkar to Upper India to do what they could to recoup the lost Mahratta prestige. In the view of those Maratha Sardars, Najibuddavalla was the prime organizer of the mischief, which culminated so disastrously at Panipat. So they invaded Rohilkhand, the principality over which Najibuddavalla held sway and compelled the Rohilla Chief to fly from his country. Subsequently they marched on to Dehli and took over the Emperor of Dehli under their protection. But death overtook the gallant Peshwa even while his youthful ambition was shaping a course for itself and Visaji Krishna Biniwale returned to Poona, leaving Holkar and Vinchoorkar behind him.

Narayanrao succeeded Madhavarao I. But his career was brought to an abrupt close by

an assassin's dagger hired for him by Anandibai, the evil-minded wife of Raghunathrao. But she did not succeed in her object; for, the clever Brahmins at the Court would not swear fealty to Raghunathrao. They recognized Madhavrao II, the posthumous son of Narayanrao, as their legitimate Chief and out of the turmoil of the party-dissensions at the Court, Nana Fadnis emerged to be the wise helmsman of the wildly tossing ship of State.

In the meanwhile in Upper India Mahadaji Scindia had been trying his strength with the Rajput Princes. The Chiefs of Jaipur and Jodhpur made common cause and offered a bold front to the forces of Scindia. In the very midst of the fight two Mahomedan Officers from the Emperor's contingent, which accompanied the Scindia, deserted and fought desperately on the enemy's side to bring about the destruction of Scindia's army. At this juncture Mahadaji thought of invok-

ing Shivaji Vithal's aid. But differences had latterly arisen between the two. Nana Fadnis advised Shivaji Vithal to hold aloof, because he suspected Scindia to be adding to his own repute instead of doing anything to revive the sunken glory of the Mahratta Empire. Besides this, the Scindia had a private grudge against Shivaji Vithal. The Scindia wanted to chastise an impudent Gosawi Sardar in his camp known as Himmat Bahaddar. The fellow ran over to Shivaji Vithal's camp and took shelter under the flag of the Peshwa. Scindia asked Shivaji Vithal to surrender the aforesaid Sardar. But Shivaji Vithal sent back a negative. 'He could not surrender Himmat Bahaddar,' said he, 'as he had sought protection of the Peshwa flag. If he were to comply with the request of Scindia, he would be deliberately insulting the dignity of the flag which was under his care.' Scindia took umbrage when

he heard the message, but was wisely prevailed upon to proceed no further. He was, however, ready to sink his differences on the critical occasion and sent for Shivaji Vithal's assistance. By the time Shivaji Vithal arrived, the Scindia's army had been routed completely and was being pursued by the infuriated Rajputs. Shivaji Vithal thought of the ancestral name, as he took in the situation at a glance. For all their infuriated vigour the Rajputs found more than a match in Shivaji Vithal, who not only flung back the defeat to their side, but pursued them far into the very heart of Jaipur. Mahadaji Scindia gratefully acknowledged Shivaji Vithal's invaluable assistance. By way of rewarding the same, he gave him a sanad for the district in Fatteabad, which was under his sway. In return Shivaji Vithal made over to Scindia the Gosawi Chief, Himmat Bahadur, recommending him to his pardon.

Scindia was willing to accept the recommendation and allowed Himmat Bahaddar to accompany his army.

Later on too, Shivaji Vithal assisted Scindia, when he exacted tributes from the Rajas of Bundi and Kota. In the assignment of the tribute Shivaji Vithal had his share carefully separated from that of the Scindia. After this, Mahadaji penetrated into the heart of Dehli. He espoused the cause of the Emperor of Dehli and put down his enemies. In the distribution of titles which followed, the Scindia came in for his share and his master, the Peshwa. Something fell to Shivaji Vithal's share, a sword, a dagger and diamonds of considerable value. Also the title of "Raje Umde Tulmuluk Bahaddar" conferred on his father was made hereditary in his family.

In the score of years or so that Shivaji Vithal passed in Upper India, he had his

camp fixed at Gwalior. But Mahadaji Scindia had been taken up with the advantage of the City's excellent site, the healthy water it offered and the bracing climate of the outlying districts. So he applied to the Peshwa to have the place transferred to him. The demand was conceded and Shivaji Vithal handed over to Mahadaji Scindia the possession of the city, the fort and the surrounding districts. At the time of his return to the Deccan, Mahadaji requested Shivaji Vithal to place under him a detachment of the Vinchoorkar cavalry as a memento of the great service done by their master to the Gwalior Chief. On his return, his health sank completely and he died in 1794.

Before his death the suggestion was made to him to adopt Narsinh Khanderao, the only son of Khanderao Vithal. But Shivaji Vithal loved Khanderao much ; so he requested the Peshwa through Nana Fadnis


to invest Khanderao with the family dignity. The Peshwa made no objection and accordingly after the death of Shivaji Vithal, the ancestral estates and the title-deeds of the household passed on to Khanderao.

Shivaji Vithal inherited the charitable instincts of his father. He had linked his memory to that of his great parent by raising temples to his family god and handsomely endowing them; and after the manner of his father he too tried to bring relief to many a starving household of pious Brahmins.

CHAPTER VI.

The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
The head hath missed an earthly wreath.

Tennyson.

FTER the death of Shivaji Vithal his brother Khanderao Vithal was invested with the Sardar's dignity of the Vinchoorkar family. Khanderao Vithal was a man of tall stature, his complexion was fair to look upon and he possessed a beautiful person. His Sanskrit studies were very much advanced and he had some pretensions to the composition of Sanskrit verse. But his chief ability lay in finance and he was an astute diplomat. Wrathful by temperament, he possessed an unforgiving nature.

About this time the quarrel between the Peshwa and the Nizam had come to a head and every Mahratta Sardar was ordered to enlist fresh recruits for the on-coming fight.

Rumours as regards the war with Nizam were welcome to Khanderao Vithal. He hoped to win glory on the battlefield and to prove his capacity to fight manfully for his august chief. But the hope was destined to be blighted in the bud ; for, the health of Khanderao Vithal began to fail seriously from this time onwards. And it was the sturdiness of spirit within him that prompted him to march on to the Kharda battlefield and not any energy that came out of his blood and bone.

Nana Fadnis looked with disfavour on all partisans of Raghunathrao and Vithal Shivdev was one of Raghunathrao's stoutest partisans. As a result the astute minister had not a kindly eye upon the Vinchoorkar family. This was precisely the motive which made distinction on the battlefield dear to Khanderao's heart. But the thing was not

to be. The battle of Kharda was fought out in due course, but the slight exertion, Khanderao underwent on the occasion, hastened his death. Some time before his death he had asked leave of the Peshwa to retire to his place at Narsingpore. At Narsingpore he kept his thoughts fixed on God and spent a good deal in charity. But the end was not far in coming. When it did come, all regretted its coming ; for, it was not two months since Khanderao Vithal had assumed the dignity of the household.

CHAPTER VII.

The homely beauty of the good old cause,
Is gone.

Wordsworth.

NARSINH Khanderao succeeded his father at the tender age of 12. The Peshwa had no objection to make to the transference of the dignity from father to son. Chimnaji Khanderao and Baloba Baba were asked to supervise the affairs of the estate during the minority of the young Sardar and upon them also rested the responsibility of the education and proper upbringing of young Narsinh.

The Karbhari appointed Gopalrao Patait to instruct Narsinh in all warlike feats. In horsemanship and the skilful wielding of the lance and the sword, as also in all the rest of the equipment which goes to make up a distinguished soldier, Gopalrao had made his

mark. Deoba Bhau, an honest and well-qualified clerk in the household, was asked to initiate Narsinh into the mysteries of the alphabet and a Munshi was appointed to teach him Persian. His religious instruction was entrusted to one Keshavbhat Moghe. For the proper regulation and due carrying out of these several duties, the Karbhari appointed a general supervisor in the person of Kashinathpant Baba Joglekar, who subsequently rose to the dignity of the Vinchoorkar Vakeel at the Peshwa Court.

On the retirement of the Diwan, Chimnaji Khanderao, the whole management of the affairs passed to Baloba Baba. It was during the minority of Narsinh Khanderao that young Sawai Madhavarao met his woe-ful end. And from the chaos which followed his death, Bajirao emerged to hold the reins of the Peshwa Office, helped as he was by the powerful might of the Scindia arm.

With the election of Bajirao to the Peshwa's Office, the party—strife at the Court waxed fiercer still. But the Vinchoorkar Karbhari wisely held aloof from the manifold party—dissensions at the Peshwa Court. In the name of his master he executed all that he was asked to do, but remained to the last a passive observer of the turmoil into which the State had fallen. In the meanwhile, Narsinhrao had grown to be a tall, imposing youth. He had a handsome appearance, a fair complexion, and a soldierly bearing. Of him it might be truly affirmed, "his body was framed by nature and trained by practice;" for, to the last he never relaxed in exercise.

In 1797 Tukoji Holkar died. He left four sons behind him. Kashirao and Malharrao were the legitimate pair; and Yeshwant-rao and Vithuji were illegitimate. Kashirao was held unfit for Government, as being

weak-headed and a physical wreck. On the other hand, Malharrao possessed the qualifications requisite to a successor of Tukoji. The illegitimates sided with Malharrao, who left his brother's army with a small following. Nana Fadnis lent covert aid to Malharrao. But Scindia espoused openly Kashirao's cause and sent a detachment of his forces to capture Malharrao. Malharrao resisted bravely this attempt of Scindia and died resisting, but his son Khanderao was led off as a prisoner to the Scindia camp. As a result, Yeshwantrao fled to Nagpore, Vithuji took shelter at Kolhapur and joined a band of plunderers, who infested the Peshwa dominions. Ganpatrao Panse was deputed to crush this band of robbers. Duly he performed his duty and brought off Vithuji as a captive. Bajirao ordered him to be put to death, listening in this to the evil counsel of

Baloba Kunjar, one of his worthless favourites. On this occasion young Narsinh perceived the injustice of the thing and set off to mediate in favour of Tukoji's son. His Karbhari, who knew well the temper of the Court, tried hard to dissuade him from such an undertaking. Narsinh refused to listen to the sage counsel of the old Karbhari and boldly questioned the Peshwa as regards the justice of the thing. The Peshwa curtly asked him to mind his business. As he was descending the stairs of the Peshwa residence, he came upon Baloba Kunjar, the evil genius of Bajirao. He tried to reproach him but met with, as was to be expected, an ignoble response.

Yeshwantrao grew infuriate on learning the news of his beloved brother's death. Rapidly he found means to gather round him an army of 10,000 strong, with which he molested the Scindia and threatened to avenge

his brother's cruel death. All efforts, which Scindia made to put down Holkar, proved of no avail; even the attempted sack of Indore-Holkar's capital city-did not help much to pull down the growing fabric of Yeshwant-rao's power. There were desertions on the Scindia side and people deserted Scindia's ranks only to swell the strength of Yeshwantrao's forces.

Meanwhile Yeshwantrao sent Fattesingh Mane with a force of 25,000 strong to loot the dominions of the Peshwa. Bajirao sent Dhondopant Godbole to resist Fattesingh's attempt to loot his dominions. At the same time he ordered Narsinh Khanderao to assist Dhondopant to crush the Lieutenant of Yeshwantrao. This call to war was readily responded to by Narsinh. He was eager enough to make his mark and made mighty preparations to meet the foe in Khandesh. But before he set out, he received the news of

the defeat which Dhondopant had sustained in a fight with Fattesingh. So he referred to the Peshwa for further orders and was asked to come over to Poona with all his forces.

At Poona the Peshwa was concentrating his forces to repel Yeshwantrao's attempt to capture the capital of Maharashtra. On the eve of his departure for Poona, Narsinh learned the news of the approach of Ahmadkhan, a subordinate of Amirkhan, who was one of the valiant assistants of Yeshwantrao Holkar. The proper course on this occasion was to march on straight to Poona and leave Ahmadkhan alone; such was the advice of the aged Karbhari. But Narsinh was burning to have his first encounter with the foe and went out of his way to attack Ahmadkhan. Ahmadkhan had three thousand horsemen with him. It was a decisive but bloody skirmish, and the victors not less than the vanquished had to pay a

heavy butcher's bill. Narsinh cut down the Khan in person, but lost 900 of his followers. They hastened thereafter to cross the Godavari, which was fordable at a distance of 6 miles and marched onwards to Poona. When news reached Amirkhan of the defeat of his nephew, he made haste to overtake the foe; but the Godavari offered an impassable barrier. So he turned his attention to Vinchoor, sacked the city and burnt down the residence of the Sardar.

Soon after, the great encounter with Yeshwantrao Holkar came on. The battle was decided in Holkar's favour, owing principally to the exceptional courage and valour of that Chief. With his 50,000 horsemen, animated with the one purpose of wresting victory from the foe, Yeshwantrao rushed to the capture of the cannon, which made such woeful gaps in his ranks. By the time they reached the cannon's mouth, their number^s

diminished by 10,000. But when they reached it, they silenced its roaring mouth. Not much remained to be accomplished then though it was a tough fight with Narsinh-rao, who made gallant efforts to rally his flying partisans. His followers fell fast round him and he was himself wounded in the chest, as he reached very near to Holkar. Yeshwantrao saw in him only an old comrade and congratulated him on his gallant fight for his chief and sent him back safe to his camp. After the fight was over, Bajirao desired to see the Vinchoorkar Chieftain. Still bleeding and with the unsheathed sword in his hand, he hastened to the side of his master and offered to make one more bid for success. But Bajirao had no mind to listen to his proposals; and further, he asked the Sardar not to quit his presence. Accordingly he sent word to his Commander and Diwan to join him on his march.

From Poona the Peshwa fled apace to Sinhgad and from Sinhgad to Mahad and Raigad and from Raigad he passed on to the shelter of the strong fortress of Suvarnadurga, whence he intended to go to Bassein. At Raigad however, he made over the flag and his seal to the custody of Narsinh Khanderao and asked him to join the friendly English force at Miraj. Bajirao had been negotiating for the aid of the English and hence this order to join the army under Wellesly. On his way Narsinh had to quell one Chatersing, who would not allow him to pass through the valley of Patankhore. And now the united English and Peshwa armies marched on to Poona. Yeshwantrao had, however, worked his sweet will on the city and its people and left it before Narsinh and Wellesly could reach it. Bajirao came to Poona accompanied by 1,200 English and 1,300, Native Soldiers. Bapu Gokhale and Nipan-

kar were ordered to undertake the pursuit of Holkar, but Narsinh Khanderao was asked to stay at Poona.

The year 1804-05 was a famine year. At that time Narsinh Khanderao was asked to assist Colonel Wallace to put down the rioters and the Pindharies, who infested the country in large numbers.

This done, Narsinh turned his attention to his districts in Upper India. During the confusion of the wars in the Deccan, Abaji Ingale, Jyan Battis and the Raja Dattiawalla had been usurping the afore-mentioned districts and enjoying the revenue of the same. Narsinh Khanderao asked leave of his master to set right things in Upper India. But as he was preparing to depart on that under taking, his health collapsed and he died of fever in April 1808.

As was natural, young Narsinh possessed the hereditary religious vein, but during his brief earthly career he found no scope for any practical manifestation of the same.

CHAPTER VIII.

To serve with love,
And shed your blood,
Approved is above,
But here below,
Th' examples show,
'Tis fatal to be good.

*Lord Oxford in imitation
of DRYDEN.*

NARSINH Khanderao died without leaving an heir behind him. So the well-wishers and the old servants of the House found themselves face to face with adoption, the only expedient which would keep the family name and estates in tact. They applied for leave to the Peshwa to adopt a son, who referred them to Sadashivrao Bhau Mankeshwar—one of the upstart favourites of the Peshwa. Mankeshwar had an old grudge against the Vinchoorkar House; for, Narshinh Khanderao had given a point-blank refusal to the request of the Peshwa to furnish Man-

ITS RISE AND PROGRESS.

keshwar with an attendant guard from his force, while the latter paid his annual visit to his Vatan at Tembhurni. As a consequence, the matter hung fire for some time. The precious minister of the Peshwa talked of the scanty possessions of his master and insinuated the possibility of the estates being added to the Peshwa's dominions. Seizing a favourable opportunity, Baloba Baba made one more direct application to the Peshwa, who gave the permission for adoption willingly enough and the condition, as regards the present of 3 lacs, which he put, was more or less adopted as a device. Accordingly they set about the selection of a promising lad. The choice fell upon the son of Gopal Parasharam aged 10. Bajirao examined the boy personally and being satisfied with him ordered the adoption to take place. To her adopted son, Keshavrao, his mother Ramabai gave a different name. She called him after the founder of

the family, Vithal Shivdev. So he became famous in history as Vithal Narsinh.

Vithalrao was a good penman even before he was adopted in the family; but the soldier in him had remained undeveloped so far. The Karbhari appointed one Pandoba Solaskar to give him the requisite military training. And in addition to Solaskar, other excellent tutors were engaged to look after the several aspects of his intellectual and moral education. During his minority Baburao Nana commanded the forces of the House and Baloba managed the affairs of the estate. Kashinathpant Joglekar was the Wakeel at the Peshwa Court.

It was at this period that Vithalrao came to be a close associate of Abasaheb Purandare. They were of the same age and were bound together by their comradeship in learning. The fame of their clever military feats spread far and wide, and to test the truth of the

report in person, Bapu Gokhale engaged himself in a friendly passage-at-arms with the young Sardar of Vinchoor. To his disappointment he found himself worsted by his young opponent. He consoled himself, however, by giving the credit of the victory to the high-mettled horse which the young Sardar rode and put in a demand for the same. The Diwan agreed to make over the horse to him, but he could carry out his promise only at the cost of his master's favour, who refused to countenance the idea of parting with the noble animal.

It has been already seen that an attempt was made in 1807 to quell the Pindhari pest. The attempt met with only a partial success and about this time it was found necessary to quell the Pindharis once more. Colonel Wallace was deputed to this task and Vithal Nar-sinh was ordered to assist him in his operations. Between themselves, the two manag-

ed to extirpate the Pindhari hosts. A few days after, Vithal Narsinh had to put down another impudent robber by name Shurpakarna. He was a Bania by caste, but his venturesome deeds had become the talk of the country. Vithal Narsinh destroyed his following and cut him down in person.

Again the Pindharis made head and again they had to be put down. This time the duty fell to General Smith. Vithal Narsinh was sent out as his assistant. The General succeeded in his undertaking, owing principally to the invaluable co-operation of the Vinchoorkar Sardar. And he made a candid confession of the same in the report of the operations he submitted to the Peshwa Court.

Vithal Narsinh was asked next to put down the rebellion of Trimbakji Dengale. This Dengale too was one of the unworthy favourites of Bajirao; but he had offended the English who had him placed under restraint.

He managed, however, to make his escape and gathered about him a following of Bhils, Arabs and Rohillas. It did not take Vithal Narsinh long to destroy the following of Dengale; but the man himself escaped. His residence, however, and property at Nimbgaon in Nagar District was declared forfeit. The English were greatly pleased with this service, which Vithal Narsinh performed in their interest.

Vithal Narsinh now turned his attention to the recovery of his districts in Upper India, which had been seized unrighteously by Abaji Ingale and others. The Scindia was asked to interfere through the English and soon after Vithal resumed possession of the districts, which had been so far practically lost to him.

In their final attempt to rid the country of the Pindari nuisance, the English ordered a force of 40,000 to march into Bengal and

they brought out as may as 70,000 to carry on their operations in the Deccan. The four divisions of this army were commanded respectively by Sir Thomas Hislop, Brigadier General Deveton, Sir John Macolm and Brigadier General Smith. Vithal Narsinh was asked to cooperate with General Smith. To defray the expenses of the fresh army contingents raised for the purpose, three provinces of Khandesh, Ganga Thadi and Baglan, were made over to Vithal Narsinh. Baloba Baba had been appointed Sirsubha over these three districts. But on this occasion he was asked to stay at Poona and his brother Krishnaji Shamrao was appointed to succeed him to the office of Sirsubha. The Bhils and the Ramoshis in the outlying districts banded together occasionally and molested the peace of the country. It was not very easy to deal with these high way robbers. They avoided wholesale destruction by temporary submis-

sion to organized military force. But as soon as immediate pressure was removed, they appeared again as the disturbers of peace. Balaji Bhagvant of the Kotamgaonkar family was asked to put down that nuisance. He conciliated some of them, dismissed others with presents and executed the rest who were irreconcilable.

In 1817 Bajirao formed a new treaty with the English, according to which fresh agreement, he ceded to them all districts lying to the North of the Narbuda. In consequence of the new agreement, Vithal Narsinh was asked by the English to put in a demand for districts in the Deccan, which would yield him a revenue equal to the one which he secured for his possessions north of Narbuda. But the Diwan of Vithal Narsinh requested the English to continue the Jahgir in the Vinchoorkar family in the name of the English. The English agreed to do so, pro-

vided Vithal Narsinh promised to keep ready in his employ 800 horsemen with a view to serve the English as occasion arose.

Soon after these negotiations, Vithal Narsinh was commanded by his master to come over to Poona with all his force. Vithal Narsinh hastened to obey his master's order, leaving behind him a contingent of 1500 horsemen for the assistance of General Smith. Meanwhile trouble with the Peshwa had been brewing and when hostilities seemed imminent, General Smith asked the Vinchoorkar contingent to leave his camp. Krishnaji Shamrao refused, saying that his master would be displeased by his action. But Smith threatened to treat him as an enemy, which left him no alternative but to leave the English.

It was precisely at this time that the Peshwa thought himself disillusioned as regards the motives of the English. "He would be no

longer wheedled out of his kingdom " said he and asked Vinchoorkar to aid him in his manful effort to assert his royal prestige once more. It was a singular irony of fate, that the disillusionment should have been so late in coming. Vithal Narsinh spoke out plainly enough. " It is impossible " he urged " to contend successfully with the disciplined and well-organised English force ". The miserable state of the Peshwa army, their utter inadequacy of equipment, the lack of courage and tenacity in the *personnel* of the commanding staff, all these facts spoke eloquently against any reckless thoughts of a fight with the English. But the Peshwa was completely under the influence of Bapu Gokhale, and Bapu Gokhale had deliberately thrown all prudence to the wind. He thought himself above advice of any kind whatsoever and treated with supreme contempt the man who would approach him with a qualifying

thought. It was pitiful to see the following of the Peshwa. The Patwardhans held aloof because of personal enmity; the Holkar, the Scindia and the Bhonsale were bound to observe their non-interference policy with the English. Vinchoorkar, Raste and Purandare were the only Sardars ready to risk their all in a hopeless cause. After all it was little better than a brave bid for destruction of life and property.

The fight commenced with an attack on the Resident's camp at Poona. But immediately Bajirao received the news of the arrival of reinforcements, he fled to Satara. On his way he halted at Mahuli and sent a detachment of his army to bring over the Raja of Satara, his brother and mother. He did not wait for their arrival, but made haste to reach Pandharpur. From Pandharpur he turned his steps to Poona. *En route* he encamped at Koregaum, where at

the same time Captain Staunton arrived with a detachment of 800 men. It was not long before the hostile forces joined in battle. Bajirao did not wait to see the issue of the conflict, but hastened to run towards the Karnatic. Thomas Munroe's presence in the Karnatic made any attempt to seek aid of the Mysore Prince hopeless. So Bajirao returned to Sholapur. On learning, however, of the arrival of the English force at Velapur, he fled to Aste. While there, he pricked Bapu Gokhale into a fight with the English. Bapu lost his life in the conflict and the English captured the Raja of Satara and his mother. From Aste he passed on to Kopergaon eastward into the Berars. He found out soon, however, that he was being pursued by the English on all sides; so he opened negotiations with Sir John Malcolm. Sir John Malcolm asked him to surrender all claim to sovereignty. Besides

this, he must be content to accept the allowance that would be fixed for him by the English and must retire to some holy place of his choice. Situated as he was, the Peshwa had no alternative left but to accept the terms. However he put in a word for the Sardars, who had clung to him in his dire misfortune. Sir John Malcolm promised to give a kindly consideration to the aforementioned suggestion.

A short time after the agreement with the Peshwa had come to pass, Vithal Narsinh saw Sir John Malcolm and laid before him his sheathed sword, remarking that it had no longer any use for him, as the security of his master had been guaranteed by the English. In a subsequent interview with Sir John Malcolm, the General gave him to understand that he had no claims to British liberality, as he had been to the last serving under the Peshwa flag; but considering that he had so

often proved himself useful to the English, he promised to restore all his personal lands. And the promise was duly carried out by Mount Stuart Elphinstone. But no Saranjami lands were left to him and though his request to keep up part of his house was listened to with respect, it was not conceded in the final disposal of affairs.

In thus reducing a First-Class Sardar of the Peshwa to a third-rate position, Sir John Malcolm was following a policy laid down for him by the British Resident at Poona, Mount Stuart Elphinstone. The Sardars, who had deserted the Peshwa flag early, were promised lands in addition to their legitimate Jahgirs. Those who left Bajirao subsequently were promised the continuance of their possessions. But those, who surrendered to the English when Bajirao had been defeated by Colonel Adam, were entitled to their personal Jahgirs and nothing more. But this reduction of his ancient well-won Jahgirs was felt keenly

by Vithal Narsinh. For a Sardar to be asked to disband his following is bitter as iron entering into the soul. But fidelity to a falling master should not expect any better reward in this world and Vithal Narsinh was too wise to quarrel with his destiny. Moreover Elphinstone did what he could to palliate the pressure of the blow. For one thing he relieved him from the clutching demands of the Sowkar and for fodder he made over to him extensive meadow-lands. For all that however, Vithal Narsinh could not persuade himself to the dismissal of his host of dependents and his habits of high-living made him perpetually outrun his income. When Sir John Malcolm came to be the Governor of Bombay, he made over to him two more villages, Maygaon and Brahmangaon and he gave him 15,000 rupees by way of defraying the expenses he incurred for his daughter's marriage.

Subsequently Vithal Narsinh made an application to the Indian Government putting in a claim for the recovery of his Inams in Upper India. The application was duly forwarded through Mount Stuart Elphinstone. The India Government, however, negatived this claim for Inams, saying that "the adherence of Vinchoorkar to the cause of Peshwa during the war was considered by the Government of the day to have justified and required the resumption of all his rights and possessions of every description in Hindusthan and they were in consequence transferred to Scindia and others and were no longer at their disposal."

Vithal Narsinh made however another application for the recovery of these Inams. This time he attached to the application a letter from General Smith, who spoke highly of the sterling good faith, Vithal Narsinh had observed towards the English. Tatya

Saheb's fallen fortune was to him a source of regret and he asked the Government to forgive the loyalty of that high-minded man to his old master, the Peshwa. The application was forwarded duly to the Indian Government by the then Governor of Bombay. But the Indian Government remained firm in their negative.

One last effort he made for the recovery of these Inams. He thought of requesting the Scindia to make over these Inams to their original possessor. Raghopant Rajwade was sent to Upper India to approach Scindia with this request and Bapu Potnis accompanied him as his assistant. The attempt proved fruitless however; for, both the Scindia and the Resident at Gwalior proved themselves impervious to any such request. All these fruitless attempts entailed a deal of worry, mental and physical, which had its effect ultimately in breaking down the health

of Vithal Narsinh. He died soon after at the age of 41, leaving behind him 3 sons and 3 daughters.

The management of finances was entrusted to Krishnaji Shamrao, brother to the well-known Baloba Baba. He was the Karbhari-in-chief and his younger brother Vithalrao looked after the civil affairs of the state. Narayan Yamaji alias Bapu Potnis attended to the needs of the house-hold. Gopal Bhaskar Paranjapye was the Vakeel at the English Court.

Vithal Narsinh was a kind-hearted man, charitably disposed and religious. He made some valuable additions to the ancient temple at Narsingpore built by his noble ancestor. Also he tried to remove the inconvenience of water from which the city suffered. He had water-works built at considerable cost to the west of the city ; but he did not survive to see them completed. His son Raghunathrao

THE VINCHURKAR FAMILY.

carried to completion the work begun by his father.

Vithal Narsinh had a Guru by name Raghunath Bhatji and he served with equal devotion a distinguished disciple of this Guru by name Narayan Bava.

Among his associates Abasaheb Purandare was the closest one. When this latter died, the English made no provision for his son. Vithal Narsinh interceded on his behalf and co-operating with Mount Stuart Elphinstone secured for the youngster a Saranjama of 25,000 rupees. Another of his well-known associates was Annasaheb Dhamdhere, who took up his residence with Vithal Narsinh, when for some reason or other he had the misfortune to lose the Peshwa's favour and was deprived of his estate. To his son Abasaheb Dhamdhere he gave an yearly allowance from his private purse.

CHAPTER IX.

RAGHUNATHRAO was born in 1824. The occasion of his birth was the occasion of a theft of diamonds from the Vinchoorkar treasury, which had occurred during the confused period when the power passed from the Peshwa to the English. Jewels worth nearly three-fourths of a lac were recovered and restored to their original home. In his father's eyes this was a point greatly in favour of his luck. At the age of three his mother died and a year after his marriage in 1835, his father died. Raghunathrao had two step-brothers, Krishnarao and Madhayrao, and while his own mother was dead, the mothers of his two step-brothers were living. Owing to the transference of the supreme power, a change had come over the atmosphere of the household. There were

latent in it even now, the fo spæes dissension, which developed trouble in the future.

Not much difficulty was experienced in having the estates transferred to Raghunathrao's name. As he was only 12 when his father died, the English Government had ordered the appointment of a clever and competent person to look after the management of the Jahagir. But no such appointment was actually made and the aged Karbhari continued to perform his duties as of old.

The studies, military and intellectual, which Raghunathrao had commenced during the life-time of his father, he pursued to completion after his father's death. What was more, he did not show himself unmindful of his younger brothers' education. In 1838 he had his brother Krishnarao married. All things considered however, the life of Raghunathrao was not a very enviable one. He saw that he was hated by his step-bro-

thers and he saw that his Karbhari was not managing the estates well. For himself he was too young to undertake the whole responsibility on his shoulders. There was one more grievance. The Karbhari looked forward to the marriage of his daughter with Raghunathrao. The latter gave his consent to the marriage, thinking that its accomplishment would make the Karbhari take better care of his Jahagir. The expectation was realised in a sense; but in a different sense the marriage furnished his mothers with a ground for complaint. The dissensions ultimately reached a stage, when his elder step-mother applied to the English for a division of the family estates. His younger step-mother too forwarded a similar application. The Agent for the Sardars had Raghunathrao called over to Poona. He heard both the sides; for, Raghunathrao's step-mother followed him to Poona. It was

at this time that the Agent thought of appointing for a year or so a new Karbhari. Raghunathrao could master the details of business during the term of this Karbhari's office, when the latter's aid could be dispensed with. Accordingly Ramchandra Pandoorang *alias* Abasaheb Dhamdhere was appointed to the responsible post. Meanwhile the Agent had submitted his report with regard to the dissensions in the Vinchoorkar household. The Supreme Government had partially sanctioned the division of the estate, when Raghunathrao spoke to his brother about the discredit which such a division would bring on the Vinchoorkar name. He brought him round to take his own view of the case and informed the English Government accordingly.

By this time the year had reached its end and the Karbhari reported to the British Government as regards the fitness of Raghu-

nathrao to manage his Jahagir. Immediately after this the authority was formally transferred to him. Some time after, he was given the power to decide civil suits from which there could lie no appeal. He was allowed to have stamp-paper of his own signature and was further allowed to add the income of the same to his own treasury. After a time he was also given the authority to decide criminal suits. Subsequently he transferred all his power to his brother Krishnarao. The latter showed himself capable of executing the duties he was entrusted with and won golden opinions from Sessions Judges and other responsible officers of the British Government, when they were invited to pay a flying visit to Vinchoor while touring through their own districts.

About this time orders reached the Government of Bombay to institute a searching inquiry into the claims of the Sardars who

enjoyed Saranjami lands. The new regulations for the management of Saranjams were talked of as a calamity. Raghunathrao was asked to produce Sanads with regard to the Saranjams his ancestors held prior to 1751. This was a matter of some difficulty, as all proofs of this kind had been burnt to ashes, when a follower of Amirkhan set fire to the Vinchoorkar residence. But a strict search was ordered to be made in the Daftars of the old servants of the House. Ultimately proofs in the shape of actual Sanads and copies of certificates were found in the Daftar of Karbhari Salkadhe. Before 1751 Vithal Shivdev owned 11 districts in Upper India and had obtained as Jahagir two villages of Rase and Mandke in the Deccan. The proofs were duly forwarded to Mr. Warden, the Agent for Sardars in the Deccan. The Agent prepared a table of all Saranjami lands and sent it to England for the approval of the

Court of Directors. They found the work unsatisfactory and sent it back to India. Inquiries were instituted once more and once again the work was found unsatisfactory. Finally as the outcome of all this, the Inam Committee was established in 1851.

Raghunathrao's beloved wife died about this time. The calamity cut him to the soul and he resolved to go a-touring over India with the intention of visiting many holy places.

In 1851 he returned home. Immediately after his return the proposals to divide the moveable part of the ancestral estates were carried out. The claimants were allowed each to retain what he possessed prior to the division and got in addition such things as fell to his share in the distribution entrusted to Luxmibai, step-mother to Raghunathrao.

In 1852 the British Government, noting the great abilities Krishnarao showed in the

management of matters legal, appointed him Sadar Amin at Poona. The two brothers now set about coaching up the youngest. They put him to hard study. Madhawrao applied himself very diligently to these studies and successfully passed the test to which he was subsequently put by his brother. Raghunathrao asked the Sessions Judge at Poona to examine Madhawrao as regards his knowledge of law. The Sessions Judge found him well-posted in law and certified accordingly.

In 1854 Madhawrao was invested with the dignity and authority of the Judge of the Vinchoorkar State and it fell to him to decide all the civil and criminal suits of the state. He discharged all these duties satisfactorily ; the Officers of the British Government, who paid casual visits to Vinchoor, commended highly the management of the Judicial Department of the Vinchoorkor State.

From 1851-55 Raghunathrao helped the Inam Committee to do its work. The Inam Committee Commissioner, Captain Cowper, could have accomplished little worthy of any credit without the invaluable co-operation of Raghunathrao. It was a hopeless business for him to secure the possession of the ancient records of the Peshwa with regard to the thousand and one Sanads and Saranjams of that period. The Deshmukhs, Deshpandes and other persons, who had these records and title-deeds in their possession, would not yield them to English Officers and without the possession of these records the inquiry of the Inam Committee could not proceed. But Raghunathrao helped Captain Cowper to collect these records and thus gave material aid to the success of the inquiry.

Soon after Raghunathrao was entrusted with the management of the allowance of

6,000 Rupees set apart for Shukreshwar, Kacheshwar and Wasudeo at Kopergaon. The transference was necessitated by the incapacity for management shown by previous trustees. In a like manner the collection of the revenue of Nanaj in Ahmednagar District set apart for Dnyaneshwar was undertaken by the Vinchoorkar Chief owing to past mismanagement.

In 1858 Raghunathrao helped the British Government in its attempt to introduce education into the country. He himself founded many schools in the villages included in his estate. Also at the same time he sanctioned the re-building of many a decaying temple and Chauki and gave orders for the construction of irrigation-works in districts, where the water-supply was found to be deficient.

So long it was the practice of the British Government to present suits in the name of the Sovereign to such Sardars as attended

the Durbar held annually at Poona on the Dasra day. So far however as the Vinchoorkar Sardar was concerned, owing to a request made to that effect by Raghunathrao, the Agent had received orders to present the suit by proxy to the Vakil.

The year 1857 was the memorable year of the Sepoy Mutiny. Simultaneously with the great rebellion of native Sepoys, there was an up-rising of bands of native Bhils and robbers in the neighbourhood of Vinchoor. Raghunathrao applied for aid to the English to quell these robber-bands. The Police Superintendent made over to him a detachment of Police-force. With these and others who were in his employ the Vinchoorkar Chief had not much difficulty in suppressing the petty disturbers of the district. At Dahiwad and in Sinnar there were similar up-risings ; but the Vinchoorkar Police were found efficient to put them down.

As Karbhari Madhawraosaheb of Vinchoor had co-operated whole-heartedly in the English attempts to suppress the up-risings of robbers, the British Government conferred on him the authority of Deputy Magistrate and subsequently in 1862 he was given a place in the Legislative Council as an additional member nominated by Government. And immediately after he was made a First-Class Magistrate with the authority of deciding suits in the districts of Khandesh and Ahmednagar.

In 1863 Madhawrao gave his daughter in marriage to the eldest son of the Chief of Bhor. The event was celebrated with great *eclat* ; but it had an untoward result. For, the bride died of cholera only a month after her marriage. The Chief of Bhor, however, after the lapse of 3 years married his son a second time to the daughter of Krishnarao.

The next year Raghunathrao intended go-

ing on a pilgrimage to the Karnatic district. But the same year Madhawrao was appointed a member of the commission instituted by the Bombay Government to settle once for all the claims of Deshmukhs, Deshpandes and other Vatandars. This was a difficulty ; but Raghunathrao asked his brother Krishnarao, who was Sadar Amin at Thana, to apply for a year's leave. On Krishnarao's return he set out on his pilgrimage. It may be mentioned here that Madhawrao Vinchoorkar was once more nominated a member of the Legislative Council in 1864.

The Vinchoorkar State consisted in all of 50 villages scattered over Nasik, Ahmednagar and Poona districts. Yeola in the Nasik district was also included under the Vinchoorkar sway. But the authority to decide the civil and military suits in these districts was withheld from the Vinchoorkar Chief. On an application of the Chief to secure this

power, part of it—the Magisterial part—was conceded.

Raghunathrao returned home from the Karnatic in 1865. In the April of the same year the British Government enrolled Madhawrao as a First-Class Sardar in recognition of his services during the period when he was a member of the Vatan-Commission.

About this time an artist of great fame by name Johnson had come over to Poona. Sir Bartle Frere was then the Governor of Bombay and he was on excellent terms with all the Chiefs of the Presidency. Raghunathrao suggested the idea of presenting the Governor with a painting of his self (of the Governor) drawn by the famous artist. The Sardars in the Deccan on being consulted agreed to the proposal. The presentation-ceremony came off the next day of the Durbar held on the 29th October 1866. On the occasion in the name of the Queen the Governor conferred

on the Vinchoorkar Chief the title—"Companion of the most exalted order of the Star of India." In the speech he made at the time, he did full justice to the sterling loyalty and exemplary behaviour of the Vinchoorkar Chief. Raghunathrao made a suitable reply. And on the next day, as we have seen, the presentation-ceremony took place. It was further decided to draw the paintings of all the assembled Chiefs and present them to the Governor in memory of the kindness they owed him.

Before this, that is to say in the year 1866 Madhawrao was appointed Regent of the Akkalkot State, as the Chief of that State was found incompetent to carry on the Government. Accordingly he made over his magisterial power at Yeola to this brother—Krisnarao and went off to take charge of his new appointment.

CHAPTER X.

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RAGHUNATHRAO'S wife died in 1880. This was a severe blow to him as all hope of issue, that Raghunathrao might have had, disappeared on the death of his wife. One more circumstance happened at this time, which was also a severe blow to Raghunathrao in his declining years.

In 1842 the Court of Directors framed new Regulations for the adjudication of titles to Saranjams :—

1. That all Saranjams granted prior to A. D. 1751 or held in commutation for any thing so granted, should be considered hereditary.

2. That all Saranjams granted between A. D. 1751 and 1796 should be continued to the holder at the introduction of British rule and for one generation further, with a pen-

sion of half the net proceeds of the Saranjam to the 3rd generation.

3. That all Saranjams granted after A.D. 1796, that is to say, all Saranjams granted by the last Peshwa, Bajirao, should be continued to the holder at the introduction of British rule, and after his death a pension of half the net proceeds should be granted to the next generation.

These rules were not to be applied to 'guaranteed' Saranjams. As 'guaranteed' was understood to mean 'guaranteed by treaty', the Vinchoor Saranjam case was reopened and inquired into along with other unguaranteed holdings. On this occasion Mr. Warden prefaced his observations with a quotation from Mr. Elphinstone. He gave the Resident's remarks and decision with regard to the Vinchoorkar Saranjam.

REMARKS—A great Chief. Most of his Jahagir is of ancient date. Submitted to Sir John Malcolm with the Peshwa.

DECISION—The whole of his personal lands according to the Dafter to be restored. This is proper, in consequence of the respectability of the Chief and of the promises of Sir John Malcolm, communicated in his letters of June 5th and July 26th 1818. And proceeded to observe—

“This entitles the Vinchoorkar under the rules of the Honorable Court of Directors to have his Saranjam transferred from class third to class first and declared hereditary in the fullest sense of the word ”.

But the letters of Sir John Malcolm and the Honorable Mr. Elphinstone's *Yadi* and report were not sent up along with these recommendations. As a consequence, the Court of Directors raised a doubt, whether the personal lands promised by Sir John Malcolm were indential with those in possession of the Chief at the time. The Bombay Government wrote back to say, that the personal lands,

which the Honourable Mr. Elphinstone and Sir John Malcolm were stated to have promised, should be continued on hereditary tenure, were indetical with the villages, which comprised the Saranjam then held by the family. As the Court of Directors had not before them the original letters of Sir John Malcolm, they did not deem his promises sufficient for the continuance of the Saranjam generation after generation. Secondly, they relied upon the erroneous statement of the Honorable Mr. Elphinstone, that with the exception of Rase and Mandke, the Saranjam was originally granted in 1762 ; while to be hereditary according to the rules, it should have been granted before 1751 A. D. So they declared that the Vinchoorkar Saranjam with the exception of two villages, was, according to the rules, to be continued for two generations from the introduction of the Company's rule, after which it was to be re-

sumed, the third generation receiving pensionary provision. But as an act of favour the Court of Directors decided that a moiety of the Saranjam, rupees 53,436 should be continued as hereditary.

This decision of the Court of Directors took Raghunathrao by surprise. But he was not then in a position to make an immediate representation protesting against the decision, as it was necessary for that purpose to search out original letters and documents. Moreover, his attention was engaged by another point equally important. The Government was in those times dead opposed to recognizing the claims of adopted heirs. Naturally Raghunathrao thought that in case of his dying childless, half the Saranjam declared hereditary would be resumed by Government. As a consequence he submitted only a provisional memorial to the Court of Directors, praying that in the event of his dying childless, half

the Saranjam declared hereditary should be continued to his brothers. The request was granted.

In a few years Raghunathrao searched all his records and collecting all the necessary evidence took up the question of the continuance of the whole Saranjam and along with it asked for the right of cross-succession. In reply the Secretary of State for India granted the right of cross-succession, but refused to reopen the case as to the continuance of the whole Saranjam.

In 1859 Raghunathrao submitted a memorial to the Secretary of State, praying for a reconsideration of previous orders and also requesting permission to adopt. In his reply the Secretary of State refused either to reopen the question or to grant the permission to adopt.

In 1868 Madhavrao came back to Vinchoor on a year's leave. The three brothers now

thought of dividing the family estates. But they found it a hard matter to come to an agreement. Raghunathrao, thereupon, called down Rao Bahadur Gopal Hari Deshmukh to help them to settle the matter. According to a previous decision of the Bombay Government, the younger brothers were each entitled to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the nett Saranjami income, and in the present instance the decision was adhered to. As regards the rest of the Vatahs and Inams, a list was made of the whole and the three agreed to abide by Gopalrao's decision. He listened carefully to the evidence put forward in support of his decision by each claimant and decided the matter to the satisfaction of every one concerned. More than a year was required to complete the arrangements. So Madhavrao applied for extension of leave, which was refused. As a consequence he had to resign his Regent's post.

In 1869 Khanderao Gaikwad of Baroda made arrangements with the English to hand over Deogaon, a village in the Nasik District, to a favourite of his, by name Babu Scindia. The Scindia and Raghunathrao exchanged hospitalities with each other, when the latter had gone over to stay for sometime at Deogaon. On his return to Baroda, he gave his master such an excellent report of the ability and learning of Bapusaheb Vinchoorkar that the latter invited Bapusaheb to his court and pressed him to stay there, doing duty as an interpreter between the Sovereign and the British Resident. Bapusaheb cleverly negatived the offer. But the Sovereign pressed him to leave his son Narsingrao at his court. The climate of Baroda, however, did not agree with his health and he made haste to return to Vinchoor.

Towards the close of the year the Duke of Edinburgh, second son to the Queen, visited

India. In memory of his visit Raghunathrao built a tower at Poona and fixed on it a clock for public use.

In 1871 Raghunathrao's step-mother died. In 1872 Lord Northbrook came over to Bombay, when the honour of being a Star of the Empire was conferred upon Raghunathrao. The Chief of Vinchoor in his turn made him a present of 10,000 Mohurs, and on his way back to Calcutta received him with great honour at Manmad (the Railway Station).

In the December of 1873 Tukoji Holkar came over to the Deccan. Raghunathrao saw in the visit a splendid opportunity for renewing the good relations, that subsisted between the two Houses in olden times. Tukoji Holkar paid a flying visit to Vinchoor on the second day of his arrival in the Deccan. Subsequently, on his return from Jejuri, he visited Vinchoor a second time. On both these occasions Raghunathrao received him with great splen-

dour and requested him to assist him in his endeavour to restore the good old relations.

The year 1875 is remarkable for the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. On this occasion Raghunathrao presented an address to the Prince. The address was composed originally in Sanskrit verse, but to make it intelligible to the Prince, Dr. Bhandarkar was requested to render it into English. Prince Edward returned the compliment by rewarding the Vinchoorkar Chief with a silver medal bearing his own likeness. The year following was a famine-year. Raghunathrao strove energetically to meet the exigencies of the distress and saved thousands of families from the death which stared them in the face.

In 1877 Lord Lytton held the great Durbar in celebration of Queen Victoria's assumption of the Imperial title. Raghunathrao was not present on this occasion. He was not invited

thereto along with many others, owing to the famine which was active all through the land. But the Agent for the Sardars in the Deccan and Mr. Erskine, the Collector of Nasik, held different gatherings in honour of the great event. Raghunathrao attended the Nasik Gathering in company of his brother Madhawrao. Soon after the Durbar, the second wife of Krishnarao died, and the regrettable event was followed by another equally regrettable one viz: the death of Madhawrao's second wife. Madhawrao had two sons, Ganpatrao and Laxumanrao and two daughters.

Krishnarao died in September 1879. Of his first wife he had three sons : Bhagwantrao, Narsingrao and Vithalrao. The eldest Bhagwantrao died in 1867. The second Narsingrao was a big-salaried officer in the Nizam State. He died in 1888. The third Vithalrao continued throughout his life a victim of perverse fate. He died in 1904. Of his second

wife, Krishnarao had one son, Ramrao alias Balasaheb Vinchoorkar, the present holder of a part of the Vinchoor Saranjam.

The Holkar Chief visited Vinchoor once more in the January of 1881. Raghunathrao received him in great state. There was as usual great feasting and joy. But when Raghunathrao offered to present the Chief with magnificent suits, he declined the present, saying that 'receiving and giving presents' was a formal affair, and formality was the last thing he could think of in his visit to Vinchoor. As a memento of the visit, however, he was induced to accept an excellent horse.

It had been understood, that if new documentary evidence were forthcoming, the question of the continuance of the Saranjam might be reconsidered. Accordingly a thorough search was made in the Poona Daftar and it was found that the Vinchoor Jahgir was debited in the Peshwa's account long before 1751 A. D. and that the Sanad by the

Senior Madhavarao Peshwa in 1762 to Vithal Shivdev only confirmed and consolidated the previous grants. Unfortunately, however, the Bombay Government did not deem it expedient to forward the memorial to the Secretary of State and the matter was not further taken up on account of the illness and death of Raghunathrao a year and a half afterwards.

Raghunathrao could not see again, why he should be refused permission to adopt. In 1856 Government allowed no adoption, but the policy was altered by Lord Canning's despatch of 1860. The Court of Directors had declared that in the event of his dying childless, half the Saranjam should be continued to his brothers, including the right of cross-succession, not generally conceded to First-Class Jahgirdars. This was not to be construed as preventing Raghunathrao from adopting, when adoption came to be recognised by Government.

Reasoning in the foregoing manner, Raghunathrao adopted Bhaskerrao the only son of Ramrao, nephew to the Vinchoorkar Chief. The Bombay Government, however, refused to recognize the adoption. The two pleas advanced in support of the refusal are equally weak. It is contended that the adoption was made without the permission of Government. Secondly, the adopted son being the only son of his natural father could not have been validly given in adoption.

With regard to the first plea, it may be pointed out that Raghunathrao was almost on his death-bed when he adopted Ramrao's son. He adopted him in the full confidence that justice would be done to him and at a time when it would have been suicidal to act otherwise. In refutation of the second plea of Government it may be pointed out, that there were only two boys eligible for adoption, one the son of Narsingrao and the other the son

of Ramrao. Narsingrao refused to give his son in adoption, but induced and permitted his brother Ramrao to do so. It may be also remarked that the natural mother of the adopted son, gave birth to another son only four days after the ceremony of adoption.

After the death of Raghunathrao, according to the orders of the Court of Directors passed in 1852 and 1856, half the Saranjam was resumed by Government and the other half was divided between the descendants of his two younger brothers. Narsingrao, the eldest son of Krishnarao, got half the portion of the hereditary Saranjam and the other half was claimed by Ganpatrao, the eldest son of Madhavrao. He is working as a First-Class Magistrate at Vinchoor and was nominated as an additional Member of the Legislative Council by the Government of Bombay, when the Land-Revenue Amendment Bill was passed in 1901. It may be also mentioned that he attended

the Coronation ceremony of his Majesty King Edward VII, on which occasion he was presented with a silver medal. Lakshmanrao, his younger brother, died in 1904. He left no issue behind him.

Narsingrao died in 1890 and the Saranjam was transferred to his only son Bhagvantrao. Bhagvantrao died in 1895 and subsequently the Saranjam passed to his younger brother Vithalrao, already referred to as a victim of perverse fate. Vithalrao died in 1905 and the Saranjam descended to Ramrao, who is a First-Class Magistrate at Manmad. Ramrao has one daughter and two sons living. The eldest daughter had been given in marriage to the son of the Pant Sachiwa of Bhor. The eldest son, the present writer, was given in adoption to Raghunathrao and the youngest Chandrashekhar is 6 years old still toddling about the floor, unconscious of the great injustice done to his family by the British Government.

It has been already seen that Government refused to recognise the adoption made by Raghunathrao in 1889. As a result, the humble writer of this chronicle, has been left without any provision whatsoever. The pleas put forward by Government in support of their refusal to recognise the adoption have been shown to be weak. One may be tempted to go a step further and call them absurd. In truth, it is difficult to read the history of these transactions without being led into the use of strong language. On behalf of the present writer, Ramrao, his guardian, addressed a memorial to the Secretary of State in 1892 and received the stereotyped refusal to reopen the question. Where a great injustice has been done to a family of such standing, it is certainly hard to understand the oft-repeated reply of Government quoted above. It is not that I am partial to myself, nor do I wish to treat the matter as a personal grievance. I

am confident that any right-minded man, who acquaints himself with the facts of the case, will be disposed to disapprove of the action of Government. Promises of such responsible and trusted officers of the British Government, as Sir John Malcolm and Mount Stuart Elphinstone have been treated as naught : it will not do to say that the actual letters and reports of these officers were not sent up to the court of Directors, when they gave their unjust decision, for when these letters and promises have been searched out and sent up to Government, they have refused to reopen the question. This is thus a case of serious injustice and it may not be too late even now to mend it.
